

Community Voice

INTRODUCING OUR COMMUNITY VOICE NEWSLETTER

by Rev. Daryl Clarke

Hello Brothers and Sisters, You have spoken and Your Voice has been heard! Enter "The Community Voice".

As you know, centered on Rev. Kone and the Council a Community wide survey called the Annual Community Survey was initiated in December 2015. A survey team was organized to create and implement the survey. The team consisted of Rev. Kone, Kester Wilkening, Peter Reiner, and Rev. Clarke.

This is our FIRST Community Survey and participation was about 1/4 of our community participating. With this effort being our first run, we learned many important aspects of several concerns.

After viewing the results of the survey a meeting was called with all leaders responsible for different departments or areas mentioned in the survey. This meeting allowed us to share with all the comments made from YOU about their particular area.

Actions steps were agreed upon that each leader would meet with their own team and discuss your comments and concerns that you gave in the survey. Please note that this attempt is not a cure all for various concerns but a step forward to hear your voice, listen, discuss and take action to enhance, improve and develop systems for growth and sustainability within our community.

This is the FIRST Newsletter that may appear annually or bi-annually. For sure, "The Community Voice" newsletter will appear shortly after each survey conducted and leaders received your input to share with their teams. Consider this newsletter as a Report Back to You that action has been taken and we take your input seriously.

Again, this is just the beginning. So, look out for the next survey and be ready to participate and share it with your family so that the "Voice" of each member can be heard!

COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE BFC SURVEY

by Kester Wilkening

Main take-aways of feedback specific to the Council:

1. Biggest challenge for us to "feel more like a family" is the gap between generations.
2. There is a need for all the different parts of the community to communicate and work together more to help create a "close knit" feeling.

The comments given to the Council were wide and deep in their variety, making it difficult for one person or group (Rev. Kone or the Council) to address. Therefore, one of our main action steps is #3.

Action Steps of the Council:

1. Generation Gap- The Council has been actively seeking to support our Up & Coming youth ministry, and has approved a \$1,000 fundraising match to support our youth attending BCSF this coming August.
2. Community Unity- Rev. Kone and the Council are working on a plan to update and revitalize our community mission and vision statement, an update will be provided in the next Council newsletter.
3. Empowering the community- The Council and community leadership met with an organizational consultant on March 31. The goal was to help us identify how we can empower members of the community to volunteer in ways that are sustainable for them, and therefore meet the varied needs of our members.

A "next steps" team was identified and met on April 14 and May 9: Dominic Barber, Kester Wilkening, Peter Reiner, Lynn Walsh, & Matthew Strater.

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SMALL GROUP COMMITTEE RESPONSE TO BFC SURVEY

by Lynn Walsh

Four areas of improvement were pointed out in the community survey which relate to the function of small groups. These points were: 1) although there are some highly successful and well-established groups, there is a general loss of vibrancy in small groups in our community, 2) a lack of personal connection for spiritual growth and caring for members and families, 3) a need for a support system for bringing in and educating new guests and new members and 4) a sense of generation gap.

Research on church community enrichment and growth confirms that strong small group ministry correlate to a thriving, well-connected church community. Why? First of all there is a universal human need for a safe haven for belonging, acceptance, support and confirmation of values and principles. The family should be our first such base of love and support but well-run small groups provide a needed broader base for social and spiritual support. According to small group educator, Dale Galloway, "I believe that people grow at least eight times faster when they're in a small group and attending weekly worship celebration on Sunday than if they just attended the service itself." Research also indicates that a successful small group ministry leads to church growth. So we took your comments seriously.

What has the BFC Small Group Committee done? We have strengthened our SG committee and created a good team with: Noah and Kathy Ross, Genie Kagawa,

Jim Stinard, Mark Johnson, Dominic Barber and chair, Lynn Walsh. Upon our request, Rev. Kone pointed out the importance of small groups in his recent sermon about happiness depending on healthy human connectedness. We are working with Rev. Kone to further promote the value of small groups to BFC. We have been collecting good materials for leading small groups. The Sunday Service Committee and Rev. Kone will be re-introducing the small group discussions for some of our Sunday Services. (This was requested in particular in the survey.) We are updating our list of existing small groups and compiling a list of people looking for a small group or requests for specific topical or activity-based small groups. Sho Tamura and Toyomichi Hagiwara are starting up a sports activity group for young and "less young" alike! This will take place after Sunday service but could expand to other group sports activities. For promoting healthy small group dynamics, we are planning a half-day facilitator training in the near future. We hope to offer more substantial training for small group leaders by the end of the year.

What can you do? 1) Let anyone on the SG Committee know of your interest in joining a group 2) let us know of your ideas for creating a small group. (There are basically three types: the small group for spiritual growth and connection amongst members, similar small groups for new members or guests and activity or special topic groups such as the dancing group, book club, writers group, knitting and service group, or music groups.) 3) Tell us if you are interested in the in group facilitator training. 4) Volunteer to be a Sunday Service small group facilitator by contacting Dominic Barber or Jack LaValley. 5) Join our Small Group Committee!!

SUNDAY SERVICE COMMITTEE RESPONSE TO BFC SURVEY

by Dominic Barber

We'd all like to thank the many brothers and sisters who gave honest, thoughtful feedback in their responses to the community-wide survey. It's always good to be reminded about things we're missing, and ways in which we can improve. And we want you to know that we're listening. In the last few months we have put more excitement into our music program, and re-established an ushering team to provide a more welcoming spirit. We give all your comments and suggestions the consideration they deserve, and would like to remind you that creating a great worship experience every Sunday takes an investment of heart from everyone. Thank you all from the Sunday Service Committee.

YOUTH MINISTRY RESPONSE TO BFC SURVEY

by Toyomichi Hagiwara

To address the concern raised by the generation gap, the youth ministry team has within its scope a parent-child workshop TBA after September 2016. The youth ministry team has also been creating monthly newsletters to update district congregation on youth ministry activities. In the newsletters, we have put emphasis on explaining the themes to alleviate misunderstandings and ambiguity by communities. This summer's Sports Fest as was last year's for our District 2 is a combined effort by all generations, also the most recent District workshop addressed the generation gap and youth ministry team supported its efforts.